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ASHINGTON
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1907,
R. J. MILLS, M. B.,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL.

HIRST :
PORTLAND HOUSE PRINTING WORKS CO.

1908.

MEDICAL REPORT FOR 1907.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILLORS,

I beg to submit my report for 1907.

I have estimated the population of our district up to June 1907, at 20,000. The data on which I have arrived at this figure is as usual the new houses erected and occupied from June 1906, to June 1907, and the increase of births over deaths in the district during the same period.

The increase is as follows :—

Ashington in June 1906	...	7,067	Hirst in June 1906	...	12,209
„ Excess of births over deaths from June 1906 and 1907	...	116	„ Excess of births over deaths from June 1906 and 1907	...	329
„ New houses occupied from June 1906-7, 5 to each house	...	110	„ New houses occupied from June 1906-7, 5 to each house	...	635
		<u>7,293</u>			<u>13,173</u>

Checking above by the number of inhabited houses in the district in June 1907, at the rate obtaining in the last census namely 5·5 per house, I find that 20,000 will be a safe estimate ; 7,000 being the population of Ashington and 13,000 that of Hirst. I may remind you, however that this does not represent the entire population of Hirst : as there, over 100 houses besides the above in Hirst, yet outside our area.

BIRTH RATE.

The total number of births registered during the year 1907 was 703 ; a decrease of 18 on that of the previous year—of these 329 were males, and 374 females.

The distribution in the Wards was :- Ashington 153, a decrease of 29 on last year, and in Hirst 550 an increase of 11 over 1906.

The rate per thousand population is 35·15 that of last year being 37·5 ; while the rate in the respective wards is :- Ashington 21·85 against 26 last year ; and Hirst 42·3 as against 44·18 last year. Our district like the rest of the country has shown a slight fall in the birth rate for the past 5 years, but it is hardly appreciable year by year, and only when we go back to 1903 do we find the maximum of 28·37 for Ashington, and for Hirst 56·2.

In the following tables I have given the respective distribution of births in the Wards, and I have included the illegitimate births for the year, there being 16 in all, 2 in Ashington and 14 in Hirst, giving a rate per thousand to the birth rate of 22·7

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL. BIRTHS 1907.

MONTHS.	MALES.	FEMALES.	TOTAL.
January ...	22	34	56
February ...	25	33	58
March ...	24	35	59
April ...	29	35	64
May ...	31	26	57
June ...	29	34	63
July ...	35	32	67
August ...	34	33	67
September...	18	23	41
October ...	25	30	55
November..	30	30	60
December ...	27	29	56
TOTAL ...	329	374	703

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL. DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTHS, 1907.

MONTHS.	ASHINGTON.	HIRST.	TOTAL.	ILLEGITIMATE.				TOTAL.
				Ashington.		Hirst.		
				Male	Fem	Male	Fem	
January... ..	15	41	56	0	0	1	1	2
February ...	12	46	58	0	1	1	2	4
March	15	44	59	0	0	0	0	0
April	13	51	64	0	0	0	0	0
May	12	45	57	0	0	0	1	1
June	14	49	63	0	0	0	0	0
July	15	52	67	0	0	0	2	2
August	15	52	67	0	1	0	0	1
September ...	7	34	41	0	0	0	1	1
October... ..	8	47	55	0	0	0	1	1
November ...	12	48	60	0	0	2	2	4
December ...	15	41	56	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	153	550	703	0	2	4	10	16

DEATH RATE.

The Mortality for this year is 269, 127 males and 142 females, a substantial decrease of 45 from that of 1906. The rate per thousand population is 13.45 and correcting this by eliminating 18 cases of premature birth, 10 fatal accidents, and 2 cases of suicide, we have a corrected mortality of 11.95.

A comparison of the yearly mortality returns since the formation of the Council is as follows :—

YEAR, 1896	TOTAL MORTALITY, 17·8	CORRECTED MORTALITY, 17·4
„ 1897	„ „ 17·8	„ „ 16·6
„ 1898	„ „ 16·3	„ „ 15·4
„ 1899	„ „ 18·5	„ „ 16·8
„ 1900	„ „ 17·45	„ „ 15·17
„ 1901	„ „ 23·28	„ „ 21·28
„ 1902	„ „ 17·02	„ „ 15·3
„ 1903	„ „ 16·25	„ „ 14·25
„ 1904	„ „ 18·29	„ „ 17·35
„ 1905	„ „ 15·13	„ „ 13·6
„ 1906	„ „ 16·35	„ „ 14·7
„ 1907	„ „ 13·45	„ „ 11·95

The Mortality in each Ward is as follows :— Ashington 69 and Hirst 200, and the respective rate per thousand population in each Ward is 9·85 and 15·4.

The distribution of age mortality is as follows :—

Under 1 year, 103 deaths ; 23 in Ashington and 80 in Hirst.

From 1-5	„ 43	„ ; 3	„ 40	„
„ 5-15	„ 16	„ ; 1	„ 15	„
„ 15-25	„ 10	„ ; 1	„ 9	„
„ 25-65	„ 62	„ ; 25	„ 37	„
„ 65 upwards	35	„ ; 16	„ 19	„

The following tables show the above distribution each month.

AGE MORTALITY. 1907.

MONTHS.	Males.	Fem- males	All Ages.	Under 1 year	1 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 years.	25 to 65 years.	65 yrs. and Ups.
January ...	20	6	26	7	2	1	0	8	8
February	12	11	23	11	2	1	1	7	1
March ...	8	9	17	5	3	2	1	4	2
April ...	14	16	30	13	2	1	2	8	4
May ...	8	9	17	4	5	2	1	4	1
June ...	3	14	17	6	4	1	1	3	2
July ...	7	16	23	7	7	3	1	0	5
August ...	12	8	20	10	2	0	1	3	4
September	9	9	18	4	2	3	0	7	2
October ...	10	11	21	9	1	1	1	6	3
November	8	14	22	9	5	1	1	5	1
December	16	19	35	18	8	0	0	7	2
TOTAL ...	127	142	269	103	43	16	10	62	35

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE MORTALITY. ASHINGTON. 1907.

MONTHS.	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 years.	25 to 65 years.	65 years and Upwards
January... ..	6	1	1	0	0	2	2
February	6	3	0	0	0	2	1
March	4	2	0	0	0	2	0
April	4	1	0	0	0	2	1
May	4	1	0	1	0	2	0
June	4	1	0	0	1	1	1
July	7	3	1	0	0	0	3
August	10	4	0	0	0	3	3
September	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
October... ..	7	1	0	0	0	3	3
November	4	1	0	0	0	2	1
December	10	5	1	0	0	3	1
TOTAL	69	23	3	1	1	25	16

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE MORTALITY. HIRST. 1907.

MONTHS.	All Ages	Under 1 year.	1 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 years.	25 to 65 years.	65 years and Upwards
January... ..	20	6	1	1	0	6	6
February	17	8	2	1	1	5	0
March	13	3	3	2	1	2	2
April	26	12	2	1	2	6	3
May	13	3	5	1	1	2	1
June	13	5	4	1	0	2	1
July	16	4	6	3	1	0	2
August	10	6	2	0	1	0	1
September	15	4	2	3	0	4	2
October... ..	14	8	1	1	1	3	0
November	18	8	5	1	1	3	0
December	25	13	7	0	0	4	1
TOTAL	200	80	40	15	9	37	19

The rate of Infant Mortality over the district in 1907 is 5·15, whereas it was 7·08 last year.

The Wards show a proportion per population of 3·28 for Ashington, and 6·15 for Hirst, a slight increase for Ashington and a considerable reduction for Hirst.

Basing the Infant Mortality not on the population, but per thousand children born, the rate over the district is 146·7, as against 188·6 last year. In Ashington the rate is 150·3 and in Hirst 145·45, these rates last year being respectively 120·8 and 211·5. The great difference in the rates in comparing 1906 and 1907 is due to the fact that the deaths in Ashington though only one more than last year, present an increased ratio because of the smaller number of births; whereas in Hirst the births show an increase and the deaths a considerable reduction thus diminishing the ratio.

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT. CAUSES OF DEATH. 1907.

CAUSES OF DEATH. 1	Deaths in or belonging Whole District at Sub-joined Ages.							Deaths in Localities at all Ages.		
	All Ages. 2	Under 1 yr. 3	1 and und. 5 4	5 and und. 15 5	15 and und. 25 6	25 and und. 65 7	65 and upds. 8	Ash- ington 9	Hirst. 10	Total Deaths in Public Instit'ns in District. 11
Measles	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Whooping Cough ..	9	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	9	0
Diphtheria	5	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0
Enteric	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Diarrhœa	8	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Erysipelas	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0
Other Septic Diseases..	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Phthisis	12	0	0	1	4	7	0	4	8	0
Other Tuber Diseases ..	14	5	3	4	0	2	0	4	10	0
Cancer	7	0	0	0	1	5	1	3	4	0
Bronchitis	22	10	3	0	0	4	5	6	16	0
Pneumonia	6	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	5	0
Pleurisy	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs ..	5	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	3	0
Premature Birth ..	18	18	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	0
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition	5	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	4	0
Heart Diseases	21	2	0	0	0	11	8	8	13	0
Accidents	10	0	1	0	3	6	0	1	9	0
Suicides	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Senility	14	0	0	0	0	0	14	7	7	0
Apoplexy	4	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	0
Bright's Disease ..	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Convulsions	10	7	3	0	0	0	0	2	8	0
Meningitis Non-Tuber	10	4	4	1	0	0	1	3	7	0
Broncho. Pneumonia ..	20	9	10	1	0	0	0	1	19	0
Debility	23	23	0	0	0	0	0	8	15	0
All Other Causes ..	32	11	4	5	0	10	2	8	24	0
All Causes	200	100	40	10	10	62	35	69	200	0

An analysis of the foregoing table of causes of death, shows the following from infectious diseases, namely :—

Measles	4
Whooping Cough ..	9
Diphtheria	5
Enteric	1
Erysipelas	3

22 in all, giving a rate per thousand population of 2·1 and including the 8 cases of Diarrhœa, the rate per thousand population is only 1·5. Last year the total rate was 3·5. The deaths from Enteritis this year only numbered 8 as against 42 in 1906.

We had only 1 death from Enteric Fever during the year and not in hospital.

Deaths from Diphtheria to the number of 5 were registered throughout the year, a slight fall from last year in numbers and a considerable reduction in the percentage of those attacked. There were 60 cases notified during this year, as against 45 in 1906, the rates being 0·25 for 1907 and 0·3 for 1906 per thousand population.

The Anti-Diphtheritic Serum is supplied to all the medical men on application and its use in suitable cases has been a great factor in the saving of life from this disease. Not many years ago an attack of this disease was looked upon as inevitably fatal, but now out of 60 cases we have only 5 deaths or something like 8 per cent of those attacked.

The deaths from Phthisis this year are 12 and from other forms of Tubercular disease 14, as against 18 and 13 respectively in 1906. The death rate from Phthisis is .6 and from all forms of Tubercular disease 1.3, a reduction on last year's figures which were .9 from Phthisis and 1.6 from all forms of this disease. I am pleased to note a growing knowledge of the infectivity of this disease among the public and a certain amount of extra care in consequence. The notices against spitting in public though they have not removed that nuisance are still productive of good in calling attention to the dangers of the habit.

The purchase of vessels for the use of patients by the council would also help to prevent the spread of Phthisis in the homes, and the medical men of the district could give them out with instructions at their discretion.

The total deaths from Respiratory diseases of all kinds including Phthisis is 66, which is less by 6 than last year. Out of this number no fewer than 20 are from Broncho Pneumonia, 9 under 1 year and the others up to 5 years of age, a fact which I comment on later.

You will see by an examination of the foregoing tables that this has been a record year in low death returns from every cause. The rate per thousand population is the smallest in the Council's history, both in infant and adult life; and the numbers returned of deaths from Infectious diseases are much less than in previous years, with the exception of Whooping Cough which is greater this year than it has been since 1904. This conservation of life capital, both infant and adult in a community such as ours is of extreme moment, and this measure of success should stimulate the Council and the Public to still greater efforts.

The Infantile Mortality based per thousand children born, 146.7 against 188.6 last year is a very marked reduction. Partly this was due to the favourable climatic conditions, and let us hope that we can (and I confidently think so with good reason), also attribute a considerable part of the improvement to the educational propaganda instituted by the Council.

A remarkable feature of our death returns this year also is the almost complete absence of Diarrhoeal diseases, only 5 being returned under 1 year and only 8 for all kinds of diarrhoeal disease at all ages, and the more remarkable when we consider what a bane this disease has been to our infant population in the past. The climatic conditions certainly were on the whole against its spread, but at the time it is mostly prevalent—August and September—I had to give warning that the weather condition had changed to such as in the past had favoured an outbreak.

Out of 103 deaths under 1 year, no fewer than 39 occurred within the first month of life, and more than the half of this number within a few hours or 2 days at most after birth. These figures which I have carefully worked out this year emphasise what I have been repeatedly trying to force on the public, both by means of the Council through its meetings as reported in the press; through the courses of lectures which the Council helped me with; and through the co-operation of the various medical men in the district, namely that for healthy offspring, we must have healthy mothers and not only healthy but careful and intelligent mothers, with an appreciation of the responsibility and duties of motherhood.

The following shows the number of deaths in the first 4 weeks of life:—

Under 1 week,	1-2 weeks,	2-3 weeks,	3-4 weeks,	Total.
25	6	6	2	39

and no fewer than 30 out of this total are due to debility and premature birth.

A consideration of these figures brings home to us the startling fact that these children have perished on account of prenatal conditions which are preventable by education in maternal responsibility and Hygiene. To nourish and preserve the child we must at the same time feed and educate the mother.

Much has been said and written these last 10 years on the causes of Infantile Mortality and the same causes have still to be set forward, and the same instruction given *ad nauseam* till good results are attained.

Our district is peculiarly liable to those disorders of childhood that increase the death rate, even in spite of the fact that we have no slums, a minimum of overcrowding, and no poverty. A danger always exists where ashpits and privies are in such proximity to the dwellings through contamination of feeding stuffs with dust and flies; a danger which may be avoided by careful attention to the instructions which are periodically circulated throughout the district. The want of open spaces; the too close crowding to-gether of houses within a given area in the Hirst Ward, even though there is not a house out of conformity with the Bye-laws of the Council; and the pernicious habit of sub-letting rooms to other families, are other dangers which can only be overcome by extreme care and the appreciation by householders of their moral responsibility to their own children, and also to those of their neighbours. That the individual factor bulks largely in the making of healthy conditions is proved by the fact that in every street we find one house a picture of comfort and cleanliness, and next door under exactly the same conditions a hot, vile smelling home of pestilence and dirt. I have pointed out again and again that the difference in the mortality of the two Wards is in ratio to their birth rates which is necessarily higher in Hirst than in Ashington, in that it is populated by a younger generation at the child bearing age. The following table shows these differences in proportion to the population and birth rate of each Ward:—

ASHINGTON.					HIRST.				
Births should be	...	...	246		Births should be	...	...	456	
„ are	...	...	153		„ are	...	...	550	
				93 less					94 more
Deaths should be	...	...	94		Deaths should be	...	...	174	
„ are	...	...	69		„ are	...	...	200	
				25 less					26 more
Infant deaths per thousand born					Infant deaths per thousand born				
should be	...	...	22		should be	...	...	80	
„ are	...	...	23		are	...	...	80	
				1 more					

In the deaths amongst older persons the general death rate is reversed a much higher percentage being in Ashington per population than in Hirst.

Other causes however operate in producing this excessive mortality:—namely want of domestic training as pointed out by the late Dr. Blair, years ago; also marriage at a premature age, and as a necessary consequence on the advent of children, the utter ignorance of these young mothers, as to how the child should be clothed, fed, and cared for. Lack of knowledge in infant dietary has been responsible for many infant deaths. Taking children in arms out at night to places of amusement has resulted in chills, followed by Broncho Pneumonia, and it is in the very young children that we have most deaths from this disease. These calamities are at first the innocent result of ignorance, the natural result of boy and girl marriages, in which neither parent has any idea of giving up the play time of their youth for the responsibility of home-builders. These I say are to a certain extent innocent and remedial, but the advent of premature responsibility tends towards the shirking of duties, often to intemperance and culpable neglect in both parents. The notification of Births Act of this year provides a remedy if followed out thoroughly with the help of well trained district Nurses to instruct these mothers both as to how to take care of themselves and their children.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of cases notified during the year is considerably less than that of the previous 2 years, namely—118 as compared with 208 last year and 168 in 1905.

Diphtheria shows a considerable increase, but Scarlet Fever is reduced from 96 to 10 and Enteric Fever from 20 to 8. The rate per thousand population is 5·9, as against 10·8 last year, and the proportionate rate in the Wards is 4·7 for Ashington, and 6·4 for Hirst.

The number of cases of Diphtheria is large, but yet not epidemic, and it might be lower if the public would avoid the dangerous habit of 'sympathetic' visits to infected houses. I am frequently told, when warning against this, that there is no fear of them "catchin'" it, but I want to warn them that they will and possibly do carry it to their own children, and by their fatal kindness undo our best efforts in stamping out this disease.

The following tables show the distribution in the Wards of the notified cases, also the ages of those attacked:—

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING 12 MONTHS, ENDING
31st DECEMBER, 1907. ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Cases Notified in Whole District.								Total Cases in each Locality.		Cases removed to Hospital.	
	At Ages—Years.											
	At all Ages.	Und. 1 year.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upds.	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	
Diphtheria	60	1	21	34	2	2	0	13	47	0	0	
Scarlet Fever	10	0	4	6	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	
Erysipelas	36	0	1	4	1	27	3	15	21	0	0	
Continued Fever	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Enteric Fever	8	0	0	3	3	2	0	3	5	3	3	
Puerperal Fever	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Total	118	1	27	49	6	32	3	34	84	3	3	

DISTRIBUTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES. 1907.

Months.	Diphtheria.		Scarlet Fever		Erysipilas.		Enteric.		Cont. Fever.		Puer. Fever		TOTAL.		
	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash- ington	Hirst	Ash.	H'st	both
Jan.	0	7	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	12	15
Feb.	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Mar.	2	6	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	16
Apr.	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
May	1	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	8
Jun.	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	4	5	9
July	0	2	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	8
Aug.	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5
Sept.	2	8	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	11	14
Oct.	1	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	6	9
Nov.	1	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	6	8
Dec.	2	8	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	10	13
Total	13	47	2	8	15	21	3	5	0	3	1	0	34	84	118

HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT.

Judging by the death returns and the infectious disease statistics for the year, one reasonably infers that on the whole the general health has been good.

At the beginning of the year we had a sharp attack of Influenza, which broke out in the Winter of 1906.

There was nothing of an epidemic nature prevalent throughout the Summer, and a remarkable freedom from Zymotic Enteritis has characterised the year. Towards the end of the year a slight outbreak of Chicken Pox occurred but of a very sporadic nature.

Ringworm and diseases of the Scalp in School Children, has been a considerable trouble recently, both to the Medical Men of the district and necessarily to the School Authorities, and it is possible that something might be done to eradicate this by the co-operation of Education and Sanitary Authorities.

HOSPITAL.

The number of patients admitted during the year was only 6, 3 from each Ward. There were no deaths.

Some improvements have been made in the Wards, and the flooring and electric light installation, has added considerably to the patients' comfort. Further improvements are still necessary in the cullinary and domestic arrangements, which I hope the Council will see their way to carry out in the coming year.

SEWAGE, SCAVENGING AND DISINFECTING.

I have to report the good working condition of all the Sewers in the district. Several minor improvements have been made with success in the smaller sewers, and the extra flushing facilities provided during the year have been an advantage.

If householders would be careful when cleaning their yard sinks, to keep same filled with water and thus form a water seal, the smell sometimes complained of would cease. Notices are periodically sent out with instructions on this matter.

Ashpit cleansing proceeds as usual. They are inspected regularly by your Sanitary Inspector and myself and we are anxious that if any fault should be found, we should be at once communicated with, that it may be attended to. The nuisance still continues of putting all kinds of vegetable matter into the Ashpits, though not to the same extent as formerly.

The deposit of Ashpit refuse has been removed to a considerable distance from the district and is in a direction where there is little likelihood of building operations being conducted.

Lime spraying of Ashpits has been carried out as usual during the year, and the success of this measure is becoming more apparent each year since its adoption.

The cleansing and disinfecting of houses after an outbreak of infectious disease is vigorously carried out, and not after notifiable disease alone, but after Phthisis or suspicious cases of any kind.

I am glad to state that the householders in their anxiety to stamp out disease, help us considerably in this work and enter on it in the true spirit of prevention.

EXTENTION AND IMPROVEMENTS.

A number of new houses have been erected during the year and all in accordance with the Bye-laws. The Highway and Sanitary Committee are to be congratulated on the manner in which they by courteous suggestion and rational discussion of the plans sent to them, have been able to obtain more commodious houses, with better street accomodation, and with more open space than formerly.

This is to be encouraged as extensive building operations are being carried out in Hirst, and if the Highway Committee pursue this policy, not only will there be a strict but a generous confirmity to the Council's Bye-laws.

A strong move has been made to improve the private streets. The Long Row has been done well, both footpath and street being relaid, and a continuance of this through some of the other rows will be a great advantage. The new houses in Langwell Crescent, Station Road, and Portland Place, have their Streets all penned and ready for further improvements. The Street between Morven and Wansbeck Terraces is in need of thorough repair, also some of the back streets in Hirst. The Wall and Railing in front of the Parish Church is an immense improvement to the corner, and could be continued with a wider footpath to the convenience of the public.

The New Schools in Hirst are now completed, and the overcrowding in the existing Schools will be remedied.

The Public Urinal at Miners' Hall erected last year is maintained in good order, and a New Urinal is being provided at Hirst in connection with the Priestman Institute, as arranged for during the year.

WATER.

The Council from the beginning of 1907 became the Water Authority for the district.

The Supply is from the Pits of the Ashington Coal Coy. It is tapped a considerable distance underground in from the shaft bottom, where it filters through the free stone roof, is conducted along a specially built charnel to which no one has access but officials connected with same, is pumped to the surface, where it is filtered and distributed from tank reservoirs throughout the district. It is a deep well water and its gathering ground is many miles from the district, The sub soil over our district is of clay and to such a depth that contamination from the surface is impossible. From frequent analysis, I find the quality of the water satisfactory both chemically and bacteriologically.

Since taking over the supply, new mains have been laid down to meet the growing needs of the Hirst Ward and new branch mains are being laid down as required. Many houses have now also had the water laid into them and the Council anticipate being able to still further increase the facilities in this department.

The services of a Plumber Superintendent and Assistant have been secured, and taps, etc. throughout the district are kept in good repair.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

Regulations in connection with above were passed by the Council and became operative on March 1st, 1907.

The favourable conditions reported last year still continue, and in every case where the Cow-Keepers are Milk Vendors, the accomodation, ventilation and cleanliness are all that could be desired.

Less and never more than the number of animals registered were kept, and the sanitary conditions of housing were favourable.

There is one less Cow-Keeper and Vendor owing to the business having been given up during the year.

The Water Supply both for use by the Cattle and for cleansing vessels, etc. is ample and the condition of the vessels, etc. for retaining milk satisfactory.

No cases of infectious disease occurred in any of the farms or amongst any of the hands engaged in milking operations.

The retail vendors also keep their premises in good condition and in conformity to the Bye-laws.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

In accordance with the Factories and Workshops Act, 1901, I beg to report the number to be the same as last year, viz. :—5 Factories and 12 Workshops: 1 was added to the list and there was 1 Workshop taken off leaving the total the same.

The Bakehouses and Slaughterhouses are satisfactory. There are no underground Bakehouses.

There are no outworkers in the district.

Improvements have been carried out in connection with above without any demur, and I have found no difficulty with the proprietors in carrying out my suggestions.

Thanking you for your continued consideration and courtesy during the past year.

I remain Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. J. MILLS.

APPENDIX.

I have drawn up this table to show the comparative Birth and Death rates for England and Wales and Northumberland, taking the mean of the 10 years prior to 1906, with our Birth and Death rate for 1907.

RATE PER 1000 LIVING.					
	England and Wales mean of 10 years.	Northumber- land mean of 10 years.	Ashington U.D., 1907	Ashington Ward, 1907	Hirst Ward, 1907
Births ...	28.49	31.26	35.15	21.85	42.3
Deaths ...	16.7	16.82	13.45 corrected 11.95	9.85	15.4
Infant Mortality per 1000 born ...	145	154.9	146.7	150.3	145.45

Ashington
WD
mean of
10 years
42.08
17.6
192.8

3

0

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